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REMARKS

Timeline Regarding Response to the Final Office Action

Applicants note that the Advisory Action states: "The period for reply expires 3 months from the mailing date of the final rejection." Applicants further note that the Advisory Action mailed July 14, 2003 was mailed almost three months after the expiration date named in the Advisory Action. Further, the Advisory Action was mailed 3 days prior to the six-month expiration date for reply to the Final Office Action mailed January 17, 2003. The Advisory Action was received by Applicants' paralegal support on July 16, 2003, and was received by Applicants' agent on July 21, 2003. Thus, due to the extreme delay in mailing the Advisory Action, Applicants' agent did not receive the Advisory Action until more than six months after the mailing date of the final rejection.

Please note that Applicants' agent filed a response to the Final Office Action within the 2 month response period (specifically, the response was mailed on March 12, 2003). Further, Applicants' agent and paralegal support repeatedly contacted the Examiner with regard to the status of the present application and were assured that: 1) the Response to Final Office Action had been incorrectly docketed by the PTO and this error would be corrected; and 2) the present application would not be allowed to go abandoned.

A partial timeline for the above-referenced events is as follows (some status calls to the Examiner are omitted, as their exact dates are not known):

01-17-03	Final Office Action mailed by PTO
03-12-03	Response to Final Office Action mailed to PTO within the 2 month response period
03-25-03	Applicants received postcard acknowledging receipt of Response to Final Office Action by PTO
06-17-03	Applicants' paralegal support checked status of application using PAIR system; PAIR system

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reported receipt of 312 amendment (of which none was filed) but did not mention Response to Final Office Action (which was filed)

06-17-03 Applicants' paralegal support contacted Examiner Pert regarding status of application

06-19-03 Examiner Pert requested FAXed copy of Response to Final Office Action from Applicants' paralegal support; Examiner Pert did not have a fax number available

06-24-03 Examiner supplied fax number to Applicants' paralegal support

06-24-03 Applicants' paralegal support FAXed copy of Response to Final Office Action to Examiner Pert

07-14-03 Advisory Action mailed

07-16-03 Advisory Action received by Applicants' paralegal support

07-21-03 Advisory Action received by Applicants' agent

07-22-03 Present RCE and Amendment filed by FAX directly to Examiner Pert.

#### Request for Clarification of Application Status

Applicants' agent is unsure of the status of the present application. Although Applicants' representatives were repeatedly assured that the application would not go abandoned, more than six months have elapsed since the mailing of the Final Office Action on January 17, 2003.

If the application should be deemed to be abandoned, Applicants respectfully request that a notification of this fact be made to Applicants' agent as soon as possible, to expedite the filing of a Petition to Revive under 37 CFR 1.137. Applicants' agent, Lois D. Cartier, can be reached at telephone number 720-652-3733.

Further, Applicants are also unsure whether or not an extension of time must be applied for in the present application. Applicants are responding to the Advisory Action within seven days of the mailing of the Advisory

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Action. However, again because of the extreme delay in the mailing of the Advisory Action, the present response is not filed within the 3-month time period after the mailing date of the final rejection, as required by the Advisory Action.

In view of the fact that Applicants are in no way responsible for the present delayed response, Applicants believe that no Extension of Time fee should be charged to Applicants. However, if such a fee should be required, Applicants hereby authorize the charging of such a payment to Deposit Account Number 24-0040.

Applicants' agent urgently and respectfully requests the assistance of the Examiner and the PTO staff in resolving the status of the present application.

Supplemental IDS Filed July 17, 2003

Applicants respectfully draw to the Examiner's attention the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement filed July 17, 2003.

Examiner Interview

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesy of a telephone interview extended by Examiner Evan T. Pert to Applicants' agent, Lois D. Cartier, on July 22, 2003. During the interview, no exhibit was shown and no demonstration was conducted. Claim 1 was discussed. It was agreed that Applicants would submit amendments similar to the above with a Request for Continued Examination.

Also discussed was the status and situation of the present application with regard to the Final Office Action, the Response thereto, the Advisory Action, and the present Response to the Advisory Action. It was agreed that Applicants' agent would submit to Examiner Pert via facsimile the summary and timeline detailed above, along with the present amendment and a Request for Continued Examination.

Applicants' agent gratefully acknowledges the courtesy and helpfulness of Examiner Pert in assisting her attempts to

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unravel the previous delays and the present confusion with regard to this application.

#### Summary of Claim Status

Claims 2-5 and 10-15 are pending in the present application after entry of the present amendment. Applicants have canceled Claims 1 and 6-9, thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot. Claims 1-7 and 9 presently stand rejected. Claim 8 is objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if properly rewritten in independent form.

Claims 10-15 are allowed. Applicants thank the Examiner for this acknowledgement of patentable subject matter.

Applicants request the favorable reconsideration of the claims and withdrawal of the pending rejections and objections, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion.

#### Claim Rejections

Claims 1-7 and 9 stand rejected under 35 USC 102 and/or 103. Claims 1 and 6-9 are cancelled, thereby rendering the rejection of these claims moot. Claims 2-3 and 5 are amended to depend from allowable Claim 13, while Claim 4 depends from Claim 3. Therefore, Claims 2-5 are believed allowable for at least the reasons of Claim 13.

#### Objections to the Claims

Claim 8 is objected to as being dependent from a rejected base claim, but otherwise allowable. Applicants have cancelled Claim 8 as being redundant with allowable Claim 13.

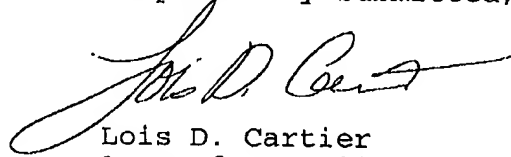
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Conclusion

No new matter has been introduced by any of the above amendments. In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants request the allowance of Claims 2-5 and 10-15. If any action other than allowance is contemplated by the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicants' agent, Lois D. Cartier, at 720-652-3733.

Respectfully submitted,



Lois D. Cartier  
Agent for Applicants  
Reg. No. 40,941

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile,  
addressed to Ex. Evan T. Pert at the following number:  
703-746-3881 on July 25, 2003.

Lois D. Cartier  
Name

  
Signature